THE TIARAS OF IMELDA MARCOS

https://tiaramania.tumblr.com/post/183219215882/the-tiaras-of-imelda-marcos

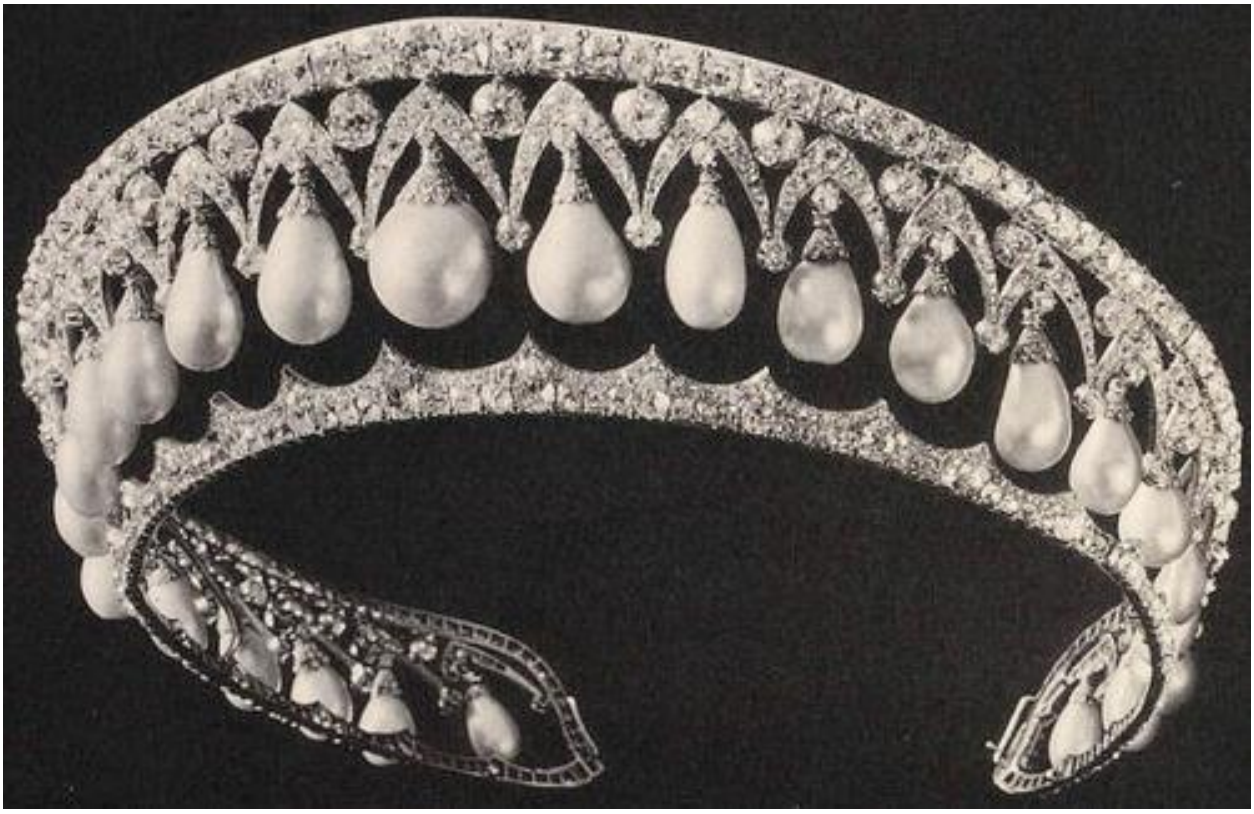
Imelda Marcos collected a huge amount of jewelry during her time as the First Lady of the Philippines. Of course, she did so illegally and at the expense of the Filipino people so after the downfall of her and her husband, the government confiscated the jewels along with artwork, gold bricks, shoes, etc. Every once in a while the government says that they are going to auction off the jewels but so far that hasn't happened.

The jewels is question were confiscated from the Marcos family when they fled the country in 1986. They are divided into three different collections based on where they were found. The Hawaii collection was taken from their luggage by customs officials when they arrived in Hawaii and is under the jurisdiction of the Presidential Commission on Good Government. The Malacañang collection was taken from Malacañang Palace, the official residence of the President of the Philippines, and is under the jurisdiction of the Office of the President. The Roumeliotes collection was taken from Demetriou Roumeliotes, who was trying to smuggle them out of the country for the Marcos family, and is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Customs. For the past three decades, all three collections have been stored at the Central Bank of the Philippines. Reports vary about how many pieces are actually in each collection but the most consistent seems to be 300 for the Hawaii, 400 for the Malacanang, and 60 for the Roumeliotes. Even though the Roumeliotes is the smallest it's usually called the most expensive of the collections.

The most recent almost auction was in 2015-2016 when the government brought in appraisers from both Christie's and Sotheby's to examine the jewels. This happened because they wanted to auction them before President Benigno Aquino III's term ended. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. was running for Vice President and he would likely have tried to stop the sale or argued for the jewels to be returned to the family who were still trying to sue to get them back. The PCGG also talked about exhibiting the jewels before an auction with the hope to remind people of the Marcos regime's corruption. Neither the exhibition or auction ended up happening but the appraisal gave us a better look at some of the jewels since a full inventory or pictures of most of the pieces have not been made available to the public.

There have been many court cases and appeals trying to decide who the jewels belong to and what should be done with them. The government claims that the jewels were acquired with money stolen from the Filipino people but Imelda Marcos denies these claims. The many lawsuits aren't the only reason the jewels have yet to be sold. Apparently, the three government entities that control the jewels cannot come to an agreement about how the money from the sale should be used. They have sold other belongings in the past like the 1991 Christie's auction of Old Master paintings and silver sold for $20.3 million most of which went to the Presidential Commission on Good Government. If the jewels ever do make it to auction I think it would be one of the most expensive collections ever sold. Here are the tiaras we know Imelda Marcos owned but there may be even more that we haven't seen.

Drop Pearl Kokoshnik - made by Bolin in 1841 for Empress Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia, wife of Nicholas I (there is a replica of this tiara in the Russian Diamond Fund)



Pearl & Diamond Tiara - set in silver and gold by Catchpole & Williams

Diamond Tiara - most likely by Cartier

Ruby & Pearl Tiara

Small Diamond Tiara

If you want to read more about Imelda Marcos's jewelry collection

- Positively Filipino - Where are Imelda's Jewels Today? - this is a great article if you want to know more about the complications surrounding a possible auction
- CNN - Philippines to sell Imelda Marcos's 'ill-gotten' jewels, worth millions
- Reuters - Rare, 25-carat pink diamond found among Imelda Marcos collection
- Reuters Video - Jewellery of Imelda Marcos fit for royalty
- Diana J. Limjoco's Jewels of Imelda Marcos - this includes her story of photographing the Roumeliotes collection in the late 1980s and some of her photos